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C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 003358

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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE, NSC FOR ABRAMS/DORAN/WATERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/02/2016

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: IMPENDING HOME DEMOLITION DRAWS APPEALS FROM  
ACTIVISTS, BUT NO SYMPATHY FROM MUNICIPALITY

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, per reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: Israeli and international human rights activists have appealed to the Jerusalem municipality to prevent the scheduled demolition of an East Jerusalem home. The municipality has so far rejected the appeals to cancel the demolition order, arguing that the house was built illegally on restricted "green space." Activists, however, contend that the demolition is part of a larger effort by the GOI to alter the demographic makeup of Jerusalem. END SUMMARY.

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RABBIS PROTEST IMPENDING HOME DEMOLITION  
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12. (C) Rabbi Arik Ascherman of Rabbis for Human Rights informed ConGen Poloff on July 26 that the Municipality of Jerusalem plans to demolish the home of Ahmed Dari, located in the Isawiyya section of East Jerusalem, claiming the structure was built outside the building zone for Isawiyya. Dari, an unemployed father of five children who suffers from chronic back problems, received a demolition order in December 2005. In January, Dari appealed the demolition order to the Municipal Affairs Court, but the court rejected his appeal and the Municipality set a date of July 5 for the demolition, which has yet to be carried out.

13. (C) Israeli and international human rights groups, including hundreds of North American rabbis, have appealed to Jerusalem Mayor Lupolianski to cancel the demolition order. The groups recently provided financial assistance to rebuild the Dari home, which had been demolished by the Municipality in April 2003. Dari's supporters allege that discrimination has prevented Palestinians in East Jerusalem from receiving building permits, and that a disproportionate number of home demolitions have occurred in predominantly Arab East Jerusalem. Dari family attorney Hussein Ghanaym told ConGen Poloff July 27 that the demolition orders "are not a legal, but a political act aimed at realizing Israeli PM Olmert's demographic plan to maintain a Jewish majority in Jerusalem."

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JERUSALEM MUNICIPALITY REJECTS APPEALS  
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14. (C) The municipality has refused to reconsider the demolition order, stating in a July 2 letter that Mr. Dari "blatantly ignored orders and continued to build illegally, even though he had been warned that it was absolutely forbidden to build in the area." In an August 1 meeting with ConGen Poloff, Mordechai Levy, Mayor Lupolianski's advisor to

Jerusalem's religious communities, remarked that Mr. Dari's case was "a lost cause" and that the demolition will take place as scheduled. Levy said that that the main reason for the demolition order was that Mr. Dari built in an area classified as "green space," where construction of any kind is forbidden. According to Levy, the land needs to be kept clear of buildings in order to safeguard the main Jerusalem-Jericho road and the nearby separation barrier.

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RABBIS SEEK USG INTERVENTION  
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15. (C) ConGen Poloff received several letters last month from Rabbis for Human Rights and rabbis in the U.S. requesting that the USG intervene to prevent the home demolition. Ghanaym told ConGen Poloff that the Municipality will not consider a compromise solution, opining that preventing the demolition will require USG intervention.

WALLES